



PEMBROKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, June 17, 2025
North Pembroke Elementary School Library

Call to Order

Mr. Boyle called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Present from Administration: Erin Obey, Superintendent; Marybeth Brust, Assistant Superintendent; Jessica DeLorenzo, Director of Student Services

Present from Committee: David Boyle, Chair; Allison Glennon, Vice Chair; Katrina Scarsciotti, Clerk; Susan Bollinger and Katrina Delaney

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

Tara Gendreau- The library is important for our children's learning, and now they will no longer have access to it. I appreciate the school committee's honesty, but I worry about children who lack library resources or supportive families. While joining Votech seems helpful, we are spending millions, yet many younger children do not have the basic skills they need. Other districts prepare their students earlier, and without library access, how can our kids keep up? As a parent, I'm unsure whether to pay for private classes or stay in this district for the community and teachers we value. How can we help our children regain their educational advantage? What is the plan moving forward? The library is important for our children's learning, and now they will no longer have access to it. I appreciate the school committee's honesty, but I worry about children who lack library resources or supportive families. While joining Votech seems helpful, we are spending millions, yet many younger children do not have the basic skills they need. Other districts prepare their students earlier, and without library access, how can our kids keep up? As a parent, I'm unsure whether to pay for private classes or stay in this district for the community and teachers we value. How can we help our children regain their educational advantage? What is the plan moving forward?

Paige Graziano – I'm reporting on the recent Policy Subcommittee meeting, where citizens could only observe. A key topic was the absentee policy. Mr. Talbot encouraged parents to engage with school administrators, but Sue Bollinger noted that some felt ignored. I want to share my experience with common sense not prevailing. In spring 2023, my daughter stubbed her toe. I wrote a note to her gym teacher and the nurse, suggesting she participate in a limited way during kickball. Although she attended track practice without issues, her teacher excluded her from gym class despite her improvement. The nurse insisted on a doctor's note, which I felt was unnecessary. A few weeks later, the nurse called for a doctor's appointment, but with my own injury and treatment plans, I refused. By the end of the year, she still couldn't participate in gym class due to a lack of communication. Despite providing a letter about the situation, I received a call on the last day of school saying she had to sit out again. After speaking with the principal, the issue was finally resolved, but she missed over two months of gym class due to this misunderstanding. While I recognize the need for protocols, it's vital to apply common sense and ensure effective communication among staff to prevent similar situations in the future.

Brian Logan – asked if the School Committee has reviewed its policies and how often. Mrs. Obey said the School Committee's Policy Manual can be found on the PPS website, and it gets reviewed regularly. There was a full review of all the policies this past year.

Acknowledge & Schedule Visitors

Mr. Boyle welcomed the audience members.

Adjustments to the Agenda

None

Communications

None

Approval of Bill Schedule

Warrants were circulated electronically.

Consideration for Approval: School Committee Meeting Minutes of June 3, 2025

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of June 3, 2025, as amended to reflect Katrina Scarsciotti as the Clerk.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Superintendent's Report

End of Year Update - Principals

Dr. McGarrigle said the end of the year was fantastic. There was a field day and carnival day, where each grade enjoyed half a day outside with inflatables. It turned out to be a great experience despite having to adjust due to some weather issues. The eighth graders worked hard to ensure they could participate in the end-of-year harbor cruise. Summer packets are posted and the current seventh graders are enrolled in summer enrichment activities. As school closed, focus shifted to scheduling and preparing for new programs coming to the building. We're getting ready to upload reports for Best Buddies, Unified, and Title One, alongside planning for the new students in August. The guidance counselors will be spending extra time helping with preparations. Overall, it's been a productive and enjoyable end to the school year.

Mr. Talbot said PHS graduated 169 students, achieving a 100% success rate for seniors, including four from outside the building. An impressive 85% are advancing to two- or four-year schools, with an increase in those choosing two-year colleges, likely due to the free tuition. There's a rise in students pursuing trades, thanks to the guidance department's efforts and meetings with local union representatives. About 7% are entering trades, 6% are entering the workforce or taking a gap year, and 2% are joining the military. PHS achieved NEASC accreditation in November. Looking ahead, the primary focus will be on finding more common planning time for staff during the school day. There was success in academic metrics, notably AP participation. Last summer, PHS earned silver status on the AP College Board honor roll, up from bronze the previous year. To reach gold status, a few metrics must be met, particularly in college optimization, where the aim is for 10% of our class to take five AP courses. Currently, it is around 5-6%, but with the increase in AP offerings, there is optimism about reaching that goal. Additionally, there were many student achievements outside the classroom. Over three seasons, there were 86 Patriot League All-Stars, five MVPs, and one team that won a state championship. The performing artists also excelled, with 10 students accepted into district programs and two earning All-State recognition. In the visual arts, six students received recognition in Congressional Art Awards, and many others were acknowledged by the Massachusetts Association of Art Educators and in statewide competitions. Staff has also been recognized, with Katie George earning the Exemplary New Teacher Award and Megan Messina receiving the Rookie of the Year Award from the Plymouth County Educators Association. Overall, both students and staff are achieving great things at PHS.

Mr. Murphy reported a successful NPES promotion night on Thursday, the 12th, with fifth-grade parents hosting and celebrating 64 promoted students. Currently, five new families are joining NPES, while nine students are leaving, with expectations of more families moving in over the summer. Much focus is being placed on the facility, as there are three

custodians, two are new to the summer process. They have assessed learning spaces for maintenance needs and created a priority list for repairs and cleaning. They are also reviewing storage spaces for broken furniture that may need disposal. Planning for the new school year includes preparing for new family tours at the end of August and refining the schedule to improve the use of Titan time. Additionally, there is a drive to integrate social-emotional support into kindergarten due to increased needs. Data from MCAS over the summer will help inform these changes. Overall, there's a lot of progress and planning underway at NPES>.

Mrs. Simmons praised the Bryantville promotion night, noting the strong turnout from sixth-grade parents. The custodial staff is hard at work preparing classrooms for the upcoming summer program, with some furniture and storage updates needed. The Hatch building is now being used for storage for various town events. Highlights from the school improvement plan include successful K-2 initiatives, particularly the UFLI program and improved coordination led by the prek-6 Content Supervisor. Conversations around benchmark data and planning have been productive. The science PLC is making strides, with pilot programs set for next year based on their feedback. DIBELS data shows promising growth: kindergarten at Bryantville improved from 33% to 78% meeting benchmarks, first grade from 50% to 76%, and second grade from 39% to 52%. While these numbers are encouraging, second grade still presents some challenges. Focusing on third grade next year will be essential, especially as reading specialists report steady progress in K-2 literacy efforts.

Mrs. Cross highlighted an important moment from Hobomock promotion night, where Mike Cogburn presented a True Titan award to a student recognized for her bravery and perseverance. Despite the surprise, she and her family were thrilled. This summer, several projects are in the works at Hobomock, including a new playground, a new PA system, and a flooring upgrade to replace old rugs with tile. The district-wide YMCA program has started, and the summer special education program will begin on July 7th, with no anticipated impact on cleaning schedules. Additionally, Mrs. Vilagie, a paraprofessional for 29 years, has retired. Finally, DIBELS data shows significant progress: kindergarten improved from 46% to 78%, first grade from 69% to 85%, and second grade from 64% to 67% by year's end.

Mr. Boyle thanked the principals, staff, and custodians for their amazing effort and added that he is always proud to say he is the Chairman of such an incredible group of people.

Subcommittee Updates

Negotiations Subcommittee: Bargaining Update

Mrs. Obey explained that all union contracts are up for successor agreements this fiscal year, expiring on June 30th. The committee is currently negotiating with the Pembroke Teachers Association for four contracts, with many proposals shared and more expected. An ongoing hiring freeze and some layoffs are being utilized to manage budget constraints while aiming for fair contracts. The school committee emphasizes fiscal responsibility to the town and is evaluating the proposals as a whole. Each principal will discuss the implications of the hiring freeze for their buildings. There's concern about managing workloads with fewer staff and increased student numbers. To date, 50 proposals have been received, over 40 of which have fiscal implications. Negotiations are ongoing, and the committee faces a legal obligation to notify teachers by June 15th of layoffs. The timing of negotiations is challenging, but the committee is committed to finding solutions that work for everyone involved. Mrs. Glennon stated that the committee can only proceed once all the proposals are received and said the Town of Pembroke has approved the budget, and that's the amount the committee has to work with. Additionally, the committee focuses on ensuring quality education and collaborating with the union while remaining optimistic.

Mrs. Obey explained that five people were laid off at the end of the school year, four of whom were paraprofessionals who will transition to different para roles within the district, so they're not truly being laid off. The library paraprofessional's position was also cut, but the three elementary school principals are committed to keeping the libraries open. Volunteers will help maintain access for students, even with reduced programming. The technology director has effectively integrated classroom skills learned in the library, ensuring students don't miss out. The three office paraprofessionals play a crucial role in managing special education paperwork, and their absence will significantly affect the school culture and processes. At the high school, the librarian, who has been instrumental in supporting research and tech initiatives, has also been laid off. If the layoff continues, the PHS library will lose valuable resources like the maker space with 3D printers. In addition, a number of open positions have been frozen while negotiations continue, particularly at the secondary level, where there is more flexibility in the scheduling. The new

elementary positions, including a math interventionist and a behavioral program at Hobomock, are on hold until there is more clarity on the financial situation and the impact of the bargaining proposals.

Mr. Talbot explained that there is currently an open science teacher position, an english position, a business position, and a part-time world language position, which are frozen for now. If these positions remain unfilled, PHS may need to collapse sections in english and science, leading to larger class sizes. For example, instead of six sections of CP Biology, there would be five, affecting other science and elective classes as well. There's also a risk of changing teaching assignments, which could impact students' elective choices. The freeze could also affect the ability to offer Latin. Overall, class sizes would increase from the low 20s to the mid-20s, with figures around 25 and 26. There may be some outliers, with a few classes reaching 28. Mr. Talbot mentioned that while not ideal, with cooperation and collaboration, these changes can be managed.

Mrs. Delaney confirmed that PHS is intentionally keeping some of the freshman classes smaller in certain areas because the transition to high school can be a significant adjustment for students. Additionally, the most vulnerable learners' class sizes will remain as appropriate as possible. Mrs. Bollinger emphasized that the key takeaway is that the approach remains very student-centered. Most of the programming is still in place, and while class sizes would increase, no programs are being eliminated, except possibly Latin. Mr. Talbot said Latin has the lowest enrollment, so it can be absorbed into another language. Mrs. Obey noted that, apart from the frozen positions, there are open positions in the district, including an elementary teaching position at North and Hobomock, a PE position at North, and two PE positions at the middle school. While the plan is to fill these roles, hiring is on hold to assess the upcoming negotiations and proposals. These positions are not part of the hiring freeze, but the committee needs to maintain flexibility in planning. The next Negotiations Subcommittee update will be in July.

Consideration for First Read: Elementary Student Handbook

Mrs. Obey said the elementary handbooks were reviewed at the Policy Subcommittee meeting on Wednesday, and one focus was on identifying mental health staff in all buildings for families to easily contact regarding student issues. Also discussed was the use of restorative practices in student discipline and the concerns around using recess as a punitive measure. Recess should not be universally withheld, as it serves as a break for students, although some teachers in upper elementary grades may use a portion of recess for discipline, which is now better outlined in the handbook.

Mrs. Obey said another addition to the handbook is that only non-motorized bikes or scooters are allowed at school. Mrs. Glennon asked why there is a rule about whether kids can bike to school or not and questioned why that isn't a decision for parents to make. Mrs. Obey said the language states that the privilege may be revoked at any time due to safety concerns or disciplinary reasons. Mrs. Cross explained that a significant number of Hobomock students in grades four through six bike to and from school. However, some of these students are riding irresponsibly down the middle of Learning Lane or arriving at school grounds much too early, which has become a supervision issue. Mrs. Glennon said she is concerned about this language, and Mrs. Bollinger stated that the committee doesn't want to take away the rights of parents and students, and suggested rewording it to clarify that it's about safety. Mrs. Scarsciotti mentioned that you can't prevent someone from biking to school. Even if the principal expresses concerns about biking, students still have the right to ride their bikes. However, having this language protects the school and reduces liability. Mr. Murphy said having this language in the handbook allows principals some leverage to have conversations with parents.

Mrs. Glennon said recess should never be taken away as she believes it is crucial. Mrs. Cross explained that recess is typically lost as a consequence of incidents that occur during recess. If recess were not used as a consequence, there would be an increase in after-school detention. She added that taking away recess is a last resort. It is after collaboration with the school social worker on a restorative initiative. Students may stay in during recess for a guided restorative activity with an adult due to repetitive behaviors, not an isolated incident. Mrs. Bollinger confirmed that students rarely lose recess for academic reasons. Mrs. Delaney suggests having the grades delineated. Mrs. Scarsciotti suggested it be worded "after all attempts". Mrs. Obey said the Policy Subcommittee will revise the proposed language.

Mrs. Glennon asked about the cell phone language. Mr. Murphy said students in upper grades (4-6) take every opportunity to be on their phones. A major problem is that the schools cannot monitor students who have 4G or 5G network phones. If their devices are not connected to the PPS internet, the school can't see what they are doing. Students need to learn the skills and expectations that come with having a phone and what they can expect in middle school. Mr. Murphy added that after speaking with Dr. McGarrigle, the elementary schools would like to adopt the cell

phone language used in the middle school handbook. Mrs. Glennon confirmed that these rules apply to the bus trips to and from school.

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to accept as a first read the Elementary Student Handbook as presented.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

Consideration for First Read: PCMS Student Handbook

Mrs. Obey said changes are mostly edits, and no new sections were added. Mrs. Delaney proposed including information based on public comment, regarding the protocol for when a parent sends a note stating that their child is hurt, and their participation in physical education. Mrs. Bollinger agreed. Mr. Boyle confirmed that if a student cannot participate in physical education due to an injury, they also cannot participate in their sport. The Policy Subcommittee will address this before the final reading of the handbook.

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to accept as a first read the PCMS Student Handbook as presented.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

Consideration for First Read: PHS Student Handbook

Mrs. Obey said PowerSchool will have a reminder about the community service requirement. Also added was the requirement of paper copies of doctors' notes/college visits for an absence to be considered excused.

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to accept as a first read the PHS Student Handbook as presented.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

Consideration for First Read: Athletic Handbook

Mrs. Obey said the updates include the language around rules of participation and forfeiting due to safety reasons, and also the update of current user fees. Mrs. Glennon suggested adding the Athletic Department staff contact information. Mrs. Delaney confirmed that the proposal made by Mr. Chilcott, when he was Chair, to add the policy was included in the handbook on page 4. Mrs. Delaney suggested adding information about financial assistance being available for user fees.

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to accept as a first read the Athletic Handbook as presented.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

Future Meeting Dates and Topics

7/8, 8/5 and 8/19 at 6:00 pm

VOTE: At 7:32 PM, on a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to enter Executive Session Pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) (3) to discuss strategy related to collective bargaining, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the School Committee, as declared by the Chair.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

APPROVED: July 8, 2025

MOTIONS

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of June 3, 2025, as amended to reflect Katrina Scarsciotti as the Clerk.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to accept as a first read the Elementary Student Handbook as presented.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to accept as a first read the PCMS Student Handbook as presented.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to accept as a first read the PHS Student Handbook as presented.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to accept as a first read the Athletic Handbook as presented.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: At 7:32 PM, on a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to enter Executive Session Pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) (3) to discuss strategy related to collective bargaining, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the School Committee, as declared by the Chair.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none